

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 4

CHICAGO TRIBUNE
31 August 1985

Espionage: How big a threat?

By James G. Wieghart

WASHINGTON—The still unfolding West German spy scandal has demolished Bonn's internal security apparatus and has shaken the government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl. But it does not appear to pose a threat to the security of other NATO countries.

This is the assessment of the American intelligence community on the impact of the defection to East Germany of West German counterintelligence official Hans Tiedge and of several lesser fish.

But several U.S. officials, including two former CIA directors, are concerned that the burgeoning West German espionage case and a rash of spy scandals elsewhere in the West, including the United States, point up a laxity and erosion in discipline that could pose a serious threat to Western security.

American intelligence officials, though sympathizing with their West German colleagues, are critical of what one official called "complacency and lack of security consciousness."

"West Germany is the most vulnerable nation in the world to espionage," a top American intelligence official said. "They are right there on the border, but unlike their adversaries, they have open borders and freedom of movement."

Former CIA Director Stansfield Turner said the scandal demonstrates that the West Germans "simply aren't taking [security] seriously enough. Here you have a fellow [Tiedge] showing all the signs of

trouble—alcoholism, indebtedness, questionable behavior—and yet nobody does anything about it."

Turner, a retired admiral appointed to the CIA post by Jimmy Carter, said the West German spy scandal, the American espionage case involving U.S. naval officers and a rash of spy cases in other NATO countries over the last several years show that the Russians have stepped up their espionage efforts.

To counter this, Turner believes, the United States and its allies need to beef up their counterintelligence efforts and tighten up on access to state secrets. Turner, who has described his views in detail in a recent book, "Secrecy and Democracy: The CIA in Transition," feels that too much information is classified secret and that too many people without a need to know have access to state secrets.

Former CIA Director William Colby attributes the upsurge in spy scandals in the West to these developments: a major improvement in the Soviet's KGB operations under the late Yuri Andropov, and diminished discipline in the West and an erosion in traditional values.

The West has to strengthen its defenses against espionage, Colby said. People have to be checked out more thoroughly before being placed in sensitive positions and monitored more closely after they get there, including being subjected to periodic polygraph examinations.

"It's not the huge jump from being a serviceman to being a spy that it once was," Colby said. "Some of today's officers are simply careerists, interested in making a buck."

James G. Wieghart is national political correspondent for Scripps Howard News Service.

Scripps Howard News Service

STAT